

Rockport Public Library

Collection Development Policy

Collection development and material's policies are guided by the principles of intellectual freedom. These stem from the First Amendment of the Constitution, which affirms a citizen's right to hold beliefs and to express them. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press also apply to its counterpart, the right to unrestricted access to the expressions and beliefs of others.

Public libraries play a unique role in the preservation of democracy by providing an open, non-judgmental institution where individuals can pursue their interests and gain an understanding of diverse opinions. Libraries must continue to play an essential role in safeguarding the intellectual liberty of the public and they must recognize, understand and support freedom of access.

1. Purpose

This document is intended for all staff involved in the selection of library materials for the Rockport Public Library. Its purpose is to serve the following functions:

- Guide the staff's thinking and decision making
- Generate commitment to meeting the mission and goals of the Rockport Public Library
- Set standards for selection to ensure consistency over time despite staff turnover
- Reduce influence of a single selector and personal biases
- Aid in deselection activities and periodic evaluation of the collection
- Direct staff and Trustees in handling complaints
- Inform library patrons as well as non-library users about the nature priorities, and scope of the selection and deselection of materials for the Rockport Public Library

2. Statement of Responsibility

While overall responsibility for the library's collection rest with the Rockport Library Board of Trustees, the Library Director is ultimately responsible for materials selection. The Director delegates some of this responsibility to selected members of the staff who possess these qualifications:

- Professionally trained
- Experienced in library materials selection
- Understand the review process of information materials
- Use existing selection tools intelligently
- Recognize future trends as well as the impact emerging technology in information retrieval

Library staff assigned to select materials for the library collection should exercise professional judgment to avoid personal bias, not only during the selection process but also in implementing the procedures in deselection activities.

In accordance with Section 33 and 34 of Chapter 78 of the *Massachusetts General Laws Annotated*, no library staff will be terminated or disciplined for acting in good faith with said policy.

3. Selection Process

The Mission Statement of the Rockport Public Library plays a major role in the selection of library materials [See Appendix A]. The selection process reflects the Library's objectives and responds to the Goals, Objectives, and Activities set forth in the latest *Strategic Plan of Service*.

Ongoing materials selection activities are founded on staff familiarity with existing collections, awareness of the needs of library users, as well as their knowledge or retrospective, current and future trends in information materials suitable for public library use. Favorable reviews are the most important criteria for selection. Cost, physical quality of the items, and materials from reputable publishers and producers are always taken into consideration.

The library staff selects materials in varying formats, including but not limited to, books, serials, audio-visual media, reference materials, econtent, and databases. Growth of the collections is controlled since stack space is limited. Old, worn-out and dated materials are removed to make room for recently acquired materials. Most of the selected materials are current imprints with retrospective buying generally limited to replacement of lost or damaged materials, and/or materials that may fill gaps in some areas of the collection. Serials, regardless of format, are evaluated by individual title and must meet selection criteria. Items recommended for purchase by patrons and staff may be placed on order if they meet selection criteria.

Careful consideration is given in the selection of new formats. Budget, community needs, existing information infrastructure, available space, and the probable impact on other library resources are all reviewed before a new format is added to the collection. The selection of material in any new format may result in the staff's decision to retire specific material formats from the Library's collections.

Works of local authors, illustrators, and items about contemporary Rockport, local history and genealogy will be selected either for circulating collections, reference, and/or the Rockport Room Collection.

Titles by local authors that are self-published are generally not added to the collection unless there is a compelling reason to do so (valuable local content, high local interest). Preference will be given if the work, or other works by the author, have been professionally reviewed. Local authors often donate self-published books to the library. If the donated book does not otherwise meet the Materials Selection Policy, it will not be accessioned.

4. Selection Tools

Library staff involved in materials selection spends considerable time reading and evaluating reviews in order to decide which materials are appropriate for the Rockport Public Library collections.

The following shall be consulted in selecting materials:

A. Standard Library Reviewing Journals

- *Booklist*
- *Kirkus Reviews*
- *Library Journal*
- *New York Times Book Review*
- *Publisher's Weekly*
- *School Library Journal*

B. Supplementary Tools

- Award winners, and core collection lists
- Best seller lists from regional newspapers
- Current reviews for print, audio-visual, and electronic materials from popular trade magazines
- Recommended lists from professional associations and non-profit organizations

- Catalogs, flyers, announcements from publishers, producers, and vendors are used only to identify titles to watch for reviews

5. Criteria in Selection

During the materials selection process the staff considers specific criteria in order to obtain the best of what is available in a cost-effective manner. The following criteria will be used as they apply:

A. Fiction

These materials are selected to support the recreational needs of the community. They provide entertainment, aesthetic and cultural experiences, or stimulate imagination. The criteria for selection are:

- Popular demand
- Suitability of subject, writing style, and reading level of the intended audience
- Format
- Award winner or best seller
- Classic work
- Local authors
- Good review of the first release materials by unknown authors and foreign writers

B. Nonfiction

These materials are selected from a broad range of subject areas with varying points of view to provide factual, informational, and educational materials for the community. The criteria for selection are:

- Current interest
- Popular demand
- Format
- Expertise of the authors
- Accuracy and treatment of subject matter
- Scope and depth of coverage
- Style of presentation
- Relevance as a record of historical events

C. Young Adult Collection

This collection is primarily for young adults between the ages of 12 and 16. The selection of materials for this collection is the responsibility of the Children's Librarian. The collection is chosen with an emphasis on materials which help develop the intellect, as well as those which entertain and enable young people to deal with the world around them. The Young Adult collection is considered a bridge to the adult collection, and it is expected that most young adults will choose their own materials with limited parental input. Young adults are encouraged to use the entire collection at the Rockport Public Library to the extent that their interests and capabilities allow.

The Young Adult collection is carefully chosen using the following criteria:

- Inclusion on ALA lists of best books for Young Adults
- Award winner

- Current interest
- Popular demand
- Author with recognized success in writing for young adults
- Inclusion on summer reading lists
- Support for school projects

D. Children's Collection

The Children's Collection is an integral part of the Rockport Public Library collections and is intended for informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs for every age group from toddler through middle school. The selection of materials for the children's collection is delegated to the Children's Librarian who may solicit suggestions from other Children's Room staff. Recommendations from parents or legal guardians are welcome.

The collection in the Children's Room is comprised of a wide range of print and non-print materials in varied formats including picture and easy-to-read books, chapter books, magazines, audio-visual media, games, puzzles, econtent, and databases. Materials in this collection are selected using the same standards as in the adult collections. Emphasis is placed upon books that children will want to read for enjoyment as well as information. Selection is primarily based on favorable reviews from professional selection tools.

Children's materials are selected with careful attention to:

- Accuracy
- Reputation of the authors, editors, illustrators and producers
- Suitability and appropriateness of vocabulary
- Quality of illustrations
- Award winner
- Format
- Ease of use
- Value of material relative to existing collection
- Titles on summer reading lists
- Appeal to potential users

Responsibilities for the use of library materials rests with the parents or legal guardians of the young patrons in their care who are encouraged to be actively involved in the reading, listening, and viewing choices their children make.

E. Rockport Room Collection

The mission of the Rockport Room is to collect, preserve, and make available to researcher materials with historic significance concerning the inhabitants, government, institutions, built and natural environments of the Town of Rockport, including Gloucester from which Rockport was later incorporated as a separate community. This collection includes books, manuscripts, maps, memorabilia, microfilm, newspaper articles, pamphlets, photographs, postcards, serials, town government documents, and audiovisual materials. These materials are arranged for use by researchers and can be located through various indexes and the online catalog.

i) Acquisition Condition

- (1) Title to the items must be free and clear, without restrictions as to use or future disposition. Donors of materials to the Library's Collections will be asked to execute a Deed of Gift by which they affirm they had clear title to the donated property, that they transfer all rights to that property, including copyrights, to the Rockport Public Library, and that they understand that the Library may keep, exchange or sell the donated property at some future date without notice to the donor.
 - (2) The Library can provide for the storage, protection and preservation of the items in a manner that assures their availability for Library purposes and kept according to professionally accepted standards.
 - (3) Materials will be retained in the collection for as long as they remain useful for the mission and purpose of the Rockport Room.
 - (4) Library Director must approve acquisitions.
- ii) Collection Guidelines
Materials will be added to the collection through gift or purchase consistent with the Mission Statement of the Rockport Public Library and the mission of the Rockport Room. The Rockport Public Library will not accept any donation with special conditions regarding retention or treatment.

The decision to add materials to the Rockport Room collection will be made by the Library Director. The library will not appraise materials for donors. Donors should further specify whether they would like to have returned to them materials the library does not wish to add to the Rockport Room collections.

6. Recommendations

Patrons and members of the staff are welcome to offer recommendations of materials for additions to the library collection. Forms are provided to facilitate this process. Works recommended by patrons for library purchase are given special consideration. All recommendations are subject to review and are added to the collection if they meet the criteria used for selecting library materials.

7. Deselection Activities

Deselection activities are carried out based on the criteria used for new materials and on the [CREW Method](#) created by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

The following are descriptions of such activities:

A. Weeding

Systematic withdrawals are made with the goal of providing a collection that is current, reliable, in good condition, well-used, and which relates to the needs and interests of Rockport residents. Materials are discarded when they are judged to be dated, in poor condition, seldom used or otherwise no longer appropriate. The [CREW Method](#) will be used to provide guidance throughout this process.

B. Discards

Discarded material may be given to the Friends of the Rockport Public Library for their book sales or may be given to other libraries and non-profit organizations. Withdrawn young adult or

children's materials may be offered to the local school and preschool libraries, if appropriate. Dated and worn-out materials are discarded if they have no remaining value.

C. Replacements

When material has been lost or is in poor physical condition, attempts are made to replace it when necessary. Replacements are also made for some materials borrowed but never returned. The replacement is selected according to the prescribed process and criteria in materials selection.

8. Miscellaneous Issues

A. Evaluation

The staff of the Rockport Public Library periodically reviews the collection relative to its current programs and services. Evaluation of the materials is based upon information from any or all of the following sources.

- Objectives required in the latest *Strategic Plan of Service*
- Compiled statistics on holdings
- Patron surveys
- Physical examination of the collection
- Shelf space
- Emerging/obsolete technologies

B. Resource Sharing

As members of the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium (MVLC) and the Massachusetts Library System (MLS), the Library's materials selection includes resource sharing such as interlibrary loan. The interlibrary loan service will be used supplement the specific educational needs and recreational desires of library patrons. Interlibrary loan requests are processed in accordance to the guidelines set forth by the Consortium.

C. Gifts

The Rockport Public Library reserves the right to accept or decline items offered for donation based upon the same criteria used for new purchases. Items not added to the collection will be given to the Friends of the Rockport Public Library for their book sales, unless the donor asks to have the items returned to them. The Library does not appraise gifts for tax purposes. A Deed of Gift form must be completed by any person or institution donating archival materials or collections to the Rockport Room.

9. Reconsideration of Library Material

The Trustees of the Rockport Public Library endorses the principles of intellectual freedom which are inherent in the *First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States* and are expressed in the *Library Bill of Rights*, *Freedom to Read Statements*, and *Freedom to View Statements* adopted by the Council of the American Library Association. All four documents are incorporated as part of this *Materials Selection Policy*.

In the materials selection process, the Rockport Public Library staff adheres to all the principals cited above and recognizes its obligation to provide as wide a spectrum of information resources as possible for the Town of Rockport. Selection cannot be restricted by the possibility that certain materials might be considered objectionable by some persons in the community based on moral, religious, social or political grounds.

Library patrons who object to a book or other material in the collection may request reconsideration of such. When a request for reconsideration is made, these procedures are followed.

1. The patron will be directed to a professional librarian or the Library Director, who will explain the materials selection policy. A copy of the policy may be given to the patron upon request. If the explanation is satisfactory, no further step is needed.

2. If the patron wishes to pursue the complaint he or she should fill out and submit to a professional librarian the *Request for Reconsideration of Library Material* form. The librarian will forward it to the Library Director. The Library Director sends a written response to the patron within 14 days from the date the form was submitted.

3. If the patron finds the staff decision unacceptable, he or she may appeal in writing to the Library Director, who then convenes a Reconsideration Committee. This Committee will consist of one Library Trustee, two members of the library staff plus the Director, and three members of the community jointly appointed by the Trustees and the Library Director.

4. The library material in question shall not be removed from the collection during the review process. As the material is being reviewed, the Reconsideration Committee conducts a thorough evaluation based on the selection guidelines outlined in this document while taking into consideration the written comments from the patron. The Committee will recommend a course of action to the Library Director within 30 days. The Library Director will inform the patron of the Committee's final decision in writing.

5. Copy of the Committee's final decision will be retained on file at the Director's Office.

**ROCKPORT
PUBLIC LIBRARY
REQUEST FOR
RECONSIDERATIO
N OF A LIBRARY
RESOURCE FORM**

The Library Board of Trustees has delegated the responsibility for the selection and evaluation of Library resources to the Library Director and has established

reconsideration procedures to address concerns about those resources. Completion of this form is the first step in those procedures. If you wish to request reconsideration of a Library resource, please return the completed form to Cindy Grove, Library Director, Rockport Public Library, 17 School St., Rockport, MA 01966.

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Do you represent yourself? _____

An Organization? _____

Resource on which you are commenting:

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Book | <input type="checkbox"/> Video/ DVD | <input type="checkbox"/> Audiobook | <input type="checkbox"/> Music CD |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Magazine | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Video Game | <input type="checkbox"/> Board Game |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Display/ Exhibit | <input type="checkbox"/> Library Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy/Steam Kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Library of Things
Item |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Format | | |

Title: _____

Author/ Producer : _____

Item: _____

What brought this resource to your attention?

Have you read the Library's criteria for selection, as stated in the Rockport Public Library Collection Development Policy?

- YES NO

What concerns you about the resource? (use other side of sheet or additional pages if necessary) Please be specific and cite pages or sections.

Is there an alternative resource(s) you suggest within this topic/genre?

Did you read, watch or listen to the entire work?

- YES NO

What would you like the Library to do about this resource?

<input type="checkbox"/> Withdraw it from the Library collection
<input type="checkbox"/> Reclassify to another age group To whom? _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Re-evaluate for collection development based on collection development policy
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

Signature of complainant _____

10. Appendices

A. Mission Statement of the Rockport Public Library

B. Vision Statement of the Rockport Public Library

C. First Amendment to the United States Constitution

D. Library Bill of Rights

E. Freedom to Read Statements

F. Freedom to View Statements

A. Mission Statement of the Rockport Public Library

The Rockport Public Library is a vital resource for ideas, information and recreation for all members of the community. It provides universal access to knowledge and lifelong learning through print, online resources, programs and services. The library will be responsive to the needs of its community, advocate and support the use of appropriate technology, build an excellent collection, commit itself to the highest ideals of library service and the principles of intellectual freedom, and provide a welcoming meeting place for the community.

*Approved by the Rockport Public Library Board of Trustees
March 26, 2015*

B. Vision Statement of the Rockport Public Library

The Rockport Public Library will be the town of Rockport's recognized source of knowledge and information, a dynamic welcoming destination, and an encourager of reading, creative programs, leading-edge technology, and materials to satisfy every curiosity.

We believe all questions and requests are important and we strive for excellence in the quality of answers we offer. We listen to our patrons, surprise them with superior service, and embrace change when it will improve our library.

We develop community partnerships that minimize duplication of efforts while exploring budget economies and strengthening our library as a valuable resource for every member of our town.

We promote the joy of reading and the value of lifelong learning to all.

*Approved by the Rockport Public Library Board of Trustees
September 29, 2016*

C. First Amendment of the Bill of Rights to the United States Constitution

CONGRESS SHALL MAKE NO LAW RESPECTING AN ESTABLISHMENT OF RELIGION, OR PROHIBITING THE FREE EXERCISE THEROF; OR ABRIDGING THE FREEDOM OF SPEECH, OR OF THE PRESS; OR THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE PEACABLY TO ASSEMBLE, AND TO PETITION THE GOVERNMENT FOR A REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES.

The Bill of Rights to the U.S. Constitution was ratified on December 15, 1791

"Censorship reflects a society's lack of confidence in itself. It is a hallmark of an authoritarian regime..." – Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, dissenting *Ginzberg v. United States*, 383 U.S. 463 (1966)

"The very purpose of a Bill of Rights was to withdraw certain subjects from the vicissitudes of political controversy, to place them beyond the reach of majorities and officials and to establish them as legal principles to be applied by the courts. One's right to life, liberty, and property, to free speech, a free press, freedom of worship and assembly, and other fundamental rights may not be submitted to vote; they depend on the outcome of no elections." – Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson, *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943)

"First Amendment freedoms are most in danger when the government seeks to control thought or to justify its laws for that impermissible end. The right to think is the beginning of freedom, and speech must be protected from the government because speech is the beginning of thought." – Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, *Ashcroft v. Free Speech Coalition* (00-795) 198 F. 3d 1083, affirmed.

"Almost all human beings have an infinite capacity for taking things for granted." – Aldous Huxley, author of *Brave New World*

"Men feared witches and burnt women. It is the function of speech to free men from the bondage of irrational fears." – U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis (1856-1941), *Whitney v. California*, 274 U.S. 357 (1927)

D. Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

A history of the Library Bill of Rights is found in the latest edition of the [Intellectual Freedom Manual](#).

Although the Articles of the Library Bill of Rights are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as [Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights](#).

E. The Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster

education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

F. The Freedom to View Statement

The FREEDOM TO VIEW, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.

4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.

5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

The Board of Trustees reserves the right to amend this policy, and to rule on situations not specifically covered herein. The Board of Trustees and the Library Director shall review this policy as needed.

Library Director

Cindy Grove

Board of Library Trustees

Lana Razdan
Cindy Sharfstein
Rob Audano

Policy voted and adopted on: June 22, 2017

Updated: 12/29/2022